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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted by the Presidents Academy of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges to examine problems faced by community college presidents following termination or forced retirement from their positions. Interviews were conducted with 12 former presidents who had been officially dismissed by their governing boards or who had retired involuntarily from their positions, requesting information on the financial, career, leisure, self-perception, and personal adjustments they made. Study findings included the following: (1) 7 of the 12 former presidents reported that while they had encountered no special financial problems, they knew of other presidents who had experienced difficulties associated with loss of income; (2) 60% of the respondents indicated that they had considered a career change to a new profession; (3) when asked about the most important steps in finding a new position, respondents underscored the value of keeping in touch with colleagues, networking, and attending professional meetings; (4) with respect to leisure time activities, respondents indicated that they now had more time for travel, physical fitness, and more free and unstructured time; and (5) all respondents reported having to adjust to the loss of friends from the workplace, but none felt that there were any serious problems. The study report offers recommendations for current presidents and those who have been terminated to help them prepare for and adjust to career changes. The interview schedule is appended. (MDB)

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Patterns of Adjustment: What Happens to Community College Presidents Following Termination or Forced Retirement

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Introduction

Among other purposes, the Presidents Academy of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges seeks to provide a forum for discussion and consideration of topics concerning the chief administrators of our nation's community, junior, and technical colleges. This project seeks to promote such discussion and consideration by examining essential problems faced by community college presidents following termination or forced retirement from their positions. The focus is upon the financial, career, leisure-time, self-perception, and significant relationship adjustments that former presidents frequently are forced to make. A consideration of how presidents successfully, or perhaps unsuccessfully, made these adjustments is included. The purpose of the study is to explore these adjustment problems and thereby provide assistance to presidents who may face similar adjustments in the future.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made during this study. They included the following:

1. Significant numbers of community college presidents have a relatively brief tenure at any given college. Many of these presidents face challenging adjustments related to this brief tenure.
2. There will be significant numbers of highly talented individuals who experience termination or forced retirement from the position of community college president. These individuals will face adjustment problems as the result of termination or forced retirement.
3. Information regarding how others successfully faced

these adjustment problems will be of value to those individuals who might face similar problems in the future.

Definition of Terms

Terminated Community College President - A chief executive officer who has been officially dismissed by his or her governing board. This will include individuals who have been re-employed as presidents elsewhere.

Forced Retired Community College Presidents -For the purposes of this study, this term will refer to a chief executive officer who has involuntarily retired from his or her position. The terminated and forced retired will be used somewhat interchangibly.

Patterns of Adjustment - All those identifiable adjustments including but not limited to personal concerns related to financial, career, leisure-time, self-perception, and significant relationship adjustments.

Procedures

Key individuals throughout the nation were informed of the intention of this study and were asked to provide the names of former presidents who might wish to participate. These key individuals included the Presidents Academy executive committee and other selected individuals familiar with community colleges. A copy of a letter sent to key individuals along with a questionnaire requesting the names of former presidents that might be willing to be interviewed is included in Appendix A. Individuals were also drawn from a list of retired presidents generated by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC). Standing presidents who had previously been terminated but had since secured new positions, were not excluded from participation. Throughout the selection process, participants were assured that their responses would be recorded and reported in a confidential manner.

The criteria for selecting former presidents for participation were as follows:

1. The former presidents were available for an in-depth interview.
2. The former presidents were characteristic of individuals appropriate for the purposes of this study as outlined in the "Introduction" section of this proposal.
3. The former presidents were receptive to being interviewed and were agreeable to contributing to the content of the study.

Individuals that meet the above criteria were then interviewed. Using techniques set forth in Michael Patton's (1980) book Qualitative Evaluation Methods, the open ended interview guide approach was employed throughout the interview process. Since the open-ended interview guide approach was employed, a guide was compiled in advance to be used during the interviews. This guide provided a degree of standardization for each interview so that data gathered could be cross referenced. A copy of the interview guide appears in Appendix B.

While using this type of instrument, the interviewer is required to adapt both the wording and sequence of questions to the specific situation. Further, some questions may not prove to be appropriate to a particular individual being interviewed. The interviewers did not, therefore, feel compelled to follow the interview guide in a rigid manner. The interviewers focused upon descriptions of situations, events, and behaviors while recording direct quotations from individuals concerning their experiences. All interviews were tape recorded or transcribed in order to provide accurate records for the data analysis portion of this study.

The interview guide included questions corresponding to each area of

adjustment suggested in the "Statement of the Problem." When it was determined that sufficient data had been collected, the data was then analyzed. Throughout this stage of the research project, the tape recorded or transcribed interviews were reviewed in an effort to discover patterns of adjustment that emerged.

Limitations

As in any research study, certain limitations soon become apparent. Several limitations deserve specific mention:

1. Primarily because of the time demands inherent in an open-ended interview process, the sample for this study was small.
2. The self-selecting nature of those receptive to being identified as presidents who were terminated or forced retired created a certain bias in the results. As one expert in higher education who reviewed an early draft of the findings stated, "I suspect that a great number of former C.E.O.s went through traumatic experiences and outcomes, but they are not very willing to admit it, even to themselves."
3. Still another bias seemed to exist in the results. The responses appeared to reflect more of the culturally correct experiences or attitudes than perhaps the respondents actually experienced. If the reader allows for these bias, useful information may still be obtained from the responses.

Related Literature

Numerous studies have been written by and about college and university presidents. This body of literature includes such well examined works as The American College President (Stoke, 1959); Leadership, Goals, and Power

in Higher Education (Richman & Farmer, 1974); At the Pleasure of the Board (Kauffman, 1980); Style and Substance: Leadership and the College Presidency (Benezet, Katz, & Mangussen, 1981); Power and the Presidency (Fisher, 1984); Leadership and Ambiguity (Cohen & March, 1986); and The Community College Presidency (Vaughan, 1986). In addition, as Harrington emphasized in the foreword to Presidential Passages (Carbone, 1981), numerous full-length histories of colleges and universities have focused to a large extent upon the college presidency. Moreover, many books concerning higher education in general have specific sections exploring the presidency.

Amidst all of this research on the college and university president, however, there is very little information regarding the adjustments that presidents are forced to make when they are terminated or forced to retire. In his classic work The American College and University (1962), for example, Frederick Rudolph discussed the presidency in virtually every section of the book. But in no section does he specifically investigate what happens .pa to men and women when they leave the college or university presidency. This scarcity of information regarding presidents who are terminated or forced to retire becomes even more pronounced when the search is limited to literature concerning community college presidents.

Several books addressed this topic in a tangential manner. Of this literature, Vaughan's (1986) book offered the most pertinent information. Vaughan included a section entitled "Life After the Presidency," in which he examined typical options available to community college presidents following their term of office. In regard to a community college president making a career change, Vaughan (1986) summarized his findings as follows:

> Several of the presidents see the office as a clear career choice and as a permanent position. Most who view it as permanent note that it is so almost by definition; it is difficult to move from the presidency to another equally

> rewarding position. Moreover, the demands of the position leave little time to prepare for another job, including university teaching which requires a record of research and publication today, even if one has the practical experience associated with the presidency.
>
> One thing is clear in regard to life after the presidency; in contrast to the situation at some major universities, there is no life to be had within the community college where the person has served as president. No one saw opportunities for ex-presidents on their own campus (p. 220).

Vaughan continued his summarization by discussing possibilities for ex-presidents in university teaching or state and national education positions. He concluded that to become a community college president is often a "somewhat irrevocable career decision" and that many presidents who are unable to find another presidency are forced to retire following the end of their tenure (p. 222). Vaughan did not specifically mention the financial, leisure-time, self perception, or a significant relationship adjustments that terminated presidents encounter.

Two other studies of the presidency only briefly mentioned the adjustments they made following termination or forced retirement. James Fisher (1986) devoted his entire book to the nuances of presidential leadership, with very little mention of what occurred following termination. He does, however, conclude his study with a series of observations that relate to termination, which include the following: "When your stock is down, don't expect too many friends to step forward, count as precious that small handful who do;" and "When I leave office, please let me slip out quietly. If you're going to give me a gold watch, send it" (p. 198).

Like Fisher (1986), Cohen and March (1986) made little mention of patterns of adjustments following termination. They do, however, include a section entitled "Modes of Departure from the College Presidency." In this section they examined five different ways by which a presidency is ended:

1. By replacement of an "acting" or "interim" president

2. By departure, through death or retirement, after age 65

3. By death before age 65

4. By tranfer to the presidency of another college

5. By resignation or dismissal

Cohen and March (1986) concluded this section on the departure of presidents with a thought that directly related to the adjustments that terminated presidents make:

> No matter what he does after he leaves the presidency, a president's memories will have a disproportionate emphasis on his life as a president. It is not a period to be learned from, smiling later about one's many mistakes. It is a period to be remembered, a time to apply the wisdom previously learned, and not a period for which the record can show 'promise' or 'learning.' The record must be written in such a way as to show 'delivery' and 'achievement.' Like the general, the college president knows he is unlikely to have a second war to remember. He must construct his record now (p. 192).

Similar to the studies previously discussed, a review of the periodic literature relating to the community college or university presidency revealed a lack of information regarding the adjustments that presidents are forced to make when they are terminated or forced to retire. One journal article, "Fired With Enthusiam" (Spurr, 1976) dealt more with the process of termination than with the resulting adjustments. Spurr (1976) did, however, focus upon emotional adjustments when he summarized his personal attitude towards his dismissal:

> How does it feel to be fired? Surprisingly, it felt good. Certainly, the end result was personally rewarding. The deans, the group with which I had worked most closely, remained friendly and supportive. The faculty reacted quickly, convening in mass meeting and voting in overwhelming numbers to express their lack of confidence in Chancellor Erwin and to ask for his resignation. The president of the student body, a close associate of Mr. Erwin, remained silent, but the vice president and the student senate spoke out vigorously (p. 45).

Spurr (1986) concluded his article by expressing his satisfaction in the fact that the college "continues to be well managed by people I recruited or with whom I had worked" (p. 46).

A computer search of the ERIC document reproduction services revealed one article (MacVittie, 1976) related to the adjustments of terminated presidents. MacVittie entitled a section of his article "Options Available for Former Presidents." In this section he argued that terminated presidents should have more rights and privileges. He suggested such options as "a professional position for a president who has served well and wished to stay on campus ...a lesser administrative position ...or a professorship where appropriate" (1976, p. 9).

When the entire body of literature, both full-length studies and periodicals, is considered, the most pertinent work identified for the purposes of this study was a monograph published by the American Council on Education entitled Presidential Passages (Carbone, 1981). Carbone's (1981) narrative offered a concise view of what happens after the presidency. His discussion focused upon all sections of higher education. He devoted an entire section to such topics as "Returning to the Classroom, Taking Another Administration Position in Higher Education, Moving to Industry, Government or the Non-profit Sector, and Retirement." Carbone (1981), along with Vaughan (1986), is one of the only writers who specifically mentions the community college presidency.

> A surprisingly large number of community college presidents in the sample served extremely short terms - one, two, or three years. Worse yet, some of them left office under stressful conditions. Two community colleges reported that their former presidents were 'unemployed,' and another indicated that the activities of its former president were 'not known.' One president who had served as chief executive of a college for twelve years reportedly 'hadn't found anything yet' nearly a year after leaving office. And

> another, whose 'address is unknown,' served as president a single year. His former college reported, 'It is believed he took a job in Texas; he resigned under pressure from the board, was given ninety days separation pay' (p. 18).

Although Carbone's study did include specific references to career adjustments, he did not specifically address such issues as financial adjustment, leisure-time, self perception, and significant relationship adjustments.

In summary, the literature related to the general nature of the American college and university presidency is abundant. Very little of this literature, however, dealt specifically with the adjustment that community college presidents made following termination or forced retirement. Since so little information has been gathered upon this subject, the data presented in this study should prove to be timely and informative.

OVERVIEW

When presidents leave their positions, whether it be by personal choice or by request from some other source, there are changes in their personal as well as their professional lives that have not received a great amount of attention or analysis. These changes are not always pleasant although they often are healthful and sometimes needed. Some individuals perceive a distinct void in their life style, others face a welcomed change of pace, but still others do not know how to react.

It may be difficult to obtain a realisitic picture of how the individual feels about the change since, for some, the matter is a particularly sensitive one. This is especially true, of course, when the change is not exactly self-initiated. This study was based upon interviews with a number of individuals who had rather recently left the position of president of a community college and were willing to discuss their feelings with one of the investigators. Those who were invited to participate were selected from a list suggested by their colleagues as those who had recently left the presidency of a community college in one of the forty nine states that have these institutions. Some who had been nominated were not willing to discuss their personal situation and several others spoke about others who were in similar circumstances but not about themselves. A few had gained perspective on their lifestyle changes and were willing to discuss their real feelings. Another group had moved into new positions, several of them into new presidencies, and were quite willing, at this point, to be objective about their former feelings and perceptions.

After interviewing a number of presidents (there were three interviewers) some of whom retired from their positions by their own choices and others who admitted to being pushed into retirement by health factors or

by outside factors, the interviewers came to the conclusion that there are several specific influences that affect individuals facing these changes, and to the conclusion that there may be some commonalities that can be identified.

Those who fall into Category 1 (by their own choice) and those in Category 2 (with encouragement from others) report many similar impressions as well as some different ones. One major change that is common to both categories is that a great majority of individuals truly miss the status of being president. It is "heady business" and few persons can escape the effects of the position of president. People wait to see what the president's going to do or say . . . they literally hang on his or her every word. The essence of the change involves the sudden realization that nobody is listening any more. Even those persons who did not take their status very seriously admitted that the change was a bothersome (in some ways) one.

This adjustment affected their social life (invitations to special events and to dinner), their recreation (golf partners, even fishing expeditions), their public service requests (service on committee and speeches), as well as their daily rushes from meeting to meeting. One can quickly perceive that some of these status changes could be classified in the positive column by most people. Since there is only one president in a college and since the college campus is highly affected by the perceptions people have of the one person who holds that poition, it is apparent that the effect of change is not only felt by the person himself or herself but also is influential upon all the others who are involved in the college affairs.

The individuals interviewed suggested a number of specific actions that persons can take in preparation for retirement or abdication from the position of president of a community college. These include:

1. The Development of a Sound, Appropriate Personal Financial Plan. Anticipation of a retirement date in time to plan adequate support for a desired life style is no doubt most important but sometimes the time for such planning is just not made availabe. The time to consider some of these needs is at the time of signing the original contract for the position. There are decisions and procedures that may protect the president and his or her family that should be a part of every contract. Many presidents have made no real estate investments as a result of housing furnished by the college; one can easily imagine the financial difficulty such an individual may have in obtaining housing at a later point in their lives.

2. The Development of Social Contacts Outside the Profession. A number of presidents reported that they had permitted their full attention to the job of being president to overwhelm their social life to the extent that they had no base when they were no longer president. An attempt to reestablish social activities in a new mode was essential. Several mentioned that the social life they now welcomed was in reality very different from what they had had as president. The necessity of preparing for this social life through friendships and other contacts cannot be left to post retirement years. Presidents, therefore, should consciously seek friendships beyond the college world prior to leaving that world.

3. The Development of a Productive Daily Schedule. While theoretically many people look forward to a life with little or no

responsibility, the actual fact of the matter is that a busy professional person is not likely to welcome sudden inactivity. The empty gap of time with no assigned or delineated responsibilities is disconcerting unless other activities are substituted. Hobbies can become a new vocation. Volunteer Services can develop into professional obligations. Even full time housekeeping may be a welcomed new job. Creative activities can become a focus as well. It is essential that an ordered, planned and contributory series of activites be developed. That individuals need an assigned responsible activity was a strong opinion of those interviewed.

4. Developing a New Career. The possibility of developing competencies and/or skills in a new career is also a possible solution. Most interviewees stressed the need to include this alternative in planning. Since these persons have had a career in the learning business, they felt no qualms about a "back to school" solution to their problems. It is interesting that most of those who suggested this were, however, quite clear on their own personal needs in this regard. The development of a new career was considered "someone else's problem."

These major changes in lifestyle and attitude were recognized by the president's who were interviewed. There seemed to be some agreement that there had to be changes but the college presidents were in a better position as a result of their own educational backgrounds than most other professions to handle the problems. Income was the sole area where the most insecurity existed, however, and alternative ways to handle that were certainly available.

Reports of Interviews

This section of the study will utilize the Interview Guide format: Financial, Career Adjustments, Leisure-time Adjustments, Self-perception Adjustments, and Recommendations.

Following the analysis of data, a bias was noted by the researchers. Presidents who, in their own view, had apparently made a satisfactory adjustment, seemed to be more inclined to participate in the study. Therefore, as the researchers reviewed and analyzed the collected data, it became apparent that the majority of information was gathered from individuals who thought of their adjustment period in a positive manner. This positive attitude towards their adjustment period was reflected in their comments.

The Interview Guide (Appendix B) first addressed the financial aspects of termination or involuntary retirement. The questions listed under Financial Adjustments are noted along with the following summarization of responses:

(a) What special financial problems do terminated or retired presidents encounter? Out of twelve responses, seven answered that they had no problem. They knew, however, of other presidents who did have problems associated with loss of income. The others mentioned the difficulty of adjusting to a fixed income, a decrease in income, loss of finanacial security. Several mentioned the cost of a home as a surprising development. One individual pointed out, however, that he would receive an augmented income from his retirement. One respondent mentioned that he now had a higher salary as a university professor than he had had as a president.

(b) What are the most important financial planning steps a current president may take in order to best be prepared for the possibility of termination or forced retirement? The comments made in response to this question were more specific: have a state retirement system integrated with social security, project and plan monthly income, find alternative ways to earn money, always have at least one year of salary guaranteed by contract at the time of resignation, have an investment plan, buy an affordable retirement house where you want to live. Two respondents advised a careful president to invest in a large home as a method of savings, have systematic savings in a good interest bearing account, and establish a supplemental retirement annuity in a tax deferred annuity program.

(c) What were the most important forms of compensation enabling you to adjust to the loss of a presidential salary (i.e. savings, consulting fees, retirement pension, salary from new position)? Almost half of the respondents replied retirement pension provisions, four reported improvement in salary from new positions, one mentioned social security, and one added the roll over contract at the time of non-renewal of contract. In the last instance, that Board paid seventeen months salary and all related benefits. Consulting fees were not as great as expected according to several presidents.

The second area of the Interview Guide related to Career Adjustments. The questions that related to career adjustments are noted along with the following summarization of responses:

(a) Did you consider a career change to a new profession? If so, what professions did you consider and why? Forty percent of the individuals contacted responded negatively. One of these individuals served as a professor for a brief time before returning to another presidency. Another president said that he had considered an offer in business.

Three others answered in the affirmative. The professions considered were real estate, business management, health care, communications, engineering, culinary arts, and hardware. Almost all agreed that some formal work was a necessary part of recovery. Learning a new vocabulary is necessary for most positions.

(b) What are the most important steps in finding a new professional position following termination or retirement? An important attitude to possess was mentioned by one respondent, "You can't plan on being a president for a given time because you can't control all the variables that can affect your employment status." Two others stated that one must keep in touch with colleagues. Others said that it is important to make a lot of friends on the way up, evaluate your personal and professional qualifications, attend professional meetings, apply for positions, get to know potential employers, be prepared and enthusiastic about a career change, obtain additional training, and even when employed, always be looking for a new job. Networking was a recognized part of the president's professional life. Changes in personal contacts

are also required.

(c) If you entered a new profession, what were the most important steps in that particular transition? Sample answers to this question included preparing for a geographical move, learning all that one could about a new career in a short period of time, enthusiastically accepting challenges. One respondent said that having been a college president for twenty-one years and running a multimillion dollar business did not overly impress the business world. This respondent went on to add that the business people were interested in how much capital the individual possesses and if the former president could "turn a buck." Several mentioned a necessary change in life style. Time is important to learn a new position.

Following Financial Adjustments and Career Adjustments, the interview guide addressed the area of Leisure-time Adjustments. The questions on leisure-time adjustments elicited numerous positive responses. These responses along with the questions are listed below.

(a) How did your termination or retirement affect your leisure-time activities? Responses included: more time to travel, more time for physical fitness, more free and unstructured time, and more time to enjoy things that one didn't have time for before. One individual maintained that one should keep busy and maintain maximum physical fitness for mental and emotional health. A few respondents stated that termination or retirement had no effect upon leisure time activities.

(b) Were you able to find positive outlets for your leisure-time activity following termination or retirement? What were the more important adjustments in this area? All said yes, no major adjustment. The activities mentioned were civic and service activities, retired teacher associations, positive relationships with old friends, exciting new friendships, exercise, gardening, helping others, and always having a daily schedule. Several mentioned the financial implication limitations for leisure time activities such as golf.

(c) Is there anything about the way you organized your leisure-time activities following your termination or retirement that would change if you were given the opportunity to do so? While several individuals responded, "no," others added: would stay busier, see new sights, meet new people, and do more things that one has never done before.

The fourth area of the Interview Guide asked questions about self-perception adjustments. The responses along with the respective questions are listed below.

(a) What advice would you give a recently terminated or retired president who was feeling a loss of self worth? Responses to this questions included: develop a healthy attitude so that one could get over the loss of attention, rejoice in new opportunities, remember that the loss is only temporary and talk it out with close friends as appropriate, deal with your own egocentrism, stay busy with quality activities, be independent in your work habits, forget about age, act as if you would relish new challenges, don't worry

about events you can't control, don't make the mistake in thinking that you are thought highly of just because you were a president, behave as usual and don't worry about what others may think, and never let the job you have become synonomous with your identity. One respondent stressed that you must think of yourself as separate and distinct from the job.

(b) How did your self-image change following termination or retirement? One respondent indicated that he became more secure, and had his image enhanced. Another individual said that he felt better about himself once he had resigned. "I passed the mirror test every day." Two individuals indicated no change. One respondent said that she eventually felt more secure, but had a "roller coaster ride" getting to that point. Another person said that he felt a little like a parasite since he did not feel productive in contributing to the economy. This person concluded his remarks by stating "I would be less than honest if I said I didn't miss all the attention." Anonymity is a new stance.

(c) Did your feelings of self-worth increase or decrease following termination or retirement? If they decreased, how did you adjust to meet this change? Remarks were as follows: no change, shifted attention to other things. Two indicated that their self worth increased. One said a definite decrease but will recover in time. Another stated that the President Emeritus status helped as did Board and State legislative honors. Several were very surprised about the positive support they received from the community and friends.

Three questions were utilized in the fifth section of the interview guide relating to significant relationship adjustments.

(a) How did your relationships with friends from the workplace change once you were terminated or retired? How did you adjust to these changes? All the responses indicated that there were some changes and adjustments but that there were not any serious problems. Several individuals moved away from the area and lost contact with some friends but still maintained a few quality friendships. Most of the respondents developed new friends and professional relationships. All the individuals interviewed were positive and realistic about these changes in their significant relationships. Two individuals mentioned that they did not visit their former campus as much and did not receive the attention from the college staff and faculty that they had once enjoyed. However, these individuals did not think that this was unusual or of any major concern. One of the respondents stated, "I made a conscious effort to be friendly with everyone regardless of how I believed they felt about me. The consensus was that professional and personal relationships often change but that "real" friends would maintain a significant relationship with the former president.

(b) What advice would you give a recently terminated or retiring president who was experiencing unusual difficulties with significant relationships? This question elicited such comments as: stay busy with civic groups, family and church. Several respondents emphasized the importance of actively

making new personal and professional friends. One retired president stated that one should be supportive of the new president. All the respondents emphasized a positive and constructive attitude and availed themselves of supportive significant friends. One president said, "Life is great everywhere and with everyone, if you want it that way!"

(c) Did your termination or retirement affect any significant personal relationship in your life? If so, how did you adjust to these changes? This question prompted these responses: Most of the interviewed presidents indicated no major changes in their significant relationships. Several mentioned that tensions were undoubtedly created. One respondent was later divorced but did not feel that the divorce was the result of the termination. Several respondents reported some modification in their significant relationships, but the comments were positive. One president stated, "I discovered I had many more friends than I thought I did."

The last section of the Interview Guide dealt with Recommendations. The specific question in this section is listed below along with a summarization of responses.

(a) What are the most important recommendations that you could offer a recently terminated or retired president who is beginning the adjustment process to that career change? The responses centered around attitude, life structure, advance planning, and constant goal setting. The responses included:

Advance financial planning for retirement or termination.

Advance career planning so options are always in mind.

Be realistic about career hazards and also the advantages of the CEO's position.

Ability to be self motivated and to structure your daily activities to task, keeping one job or seeking another job.

Accept new challenges with enthusiasm.

Think of and believe in the contributions that you could make in education or in a new career field.

Develop a positive attitude.

Don't personalize the situation.

Seek necessary professional advice regarding financial and personal planning.

Be prepared to deal with the media, community, and college in a professional manner.

Obtain employment, even if interim or temporary. It is always easier to get another position if you are currently employed.

Do not permit your ego and personal self to merge totally with the position of president. The presidency is an important position, but it should not be the sole pupose of one's life.

Utilize and rely on your professional network and personal supportive friends.

Develop vocational interests and skills.

Consider becoming a student again.

One president cogently said, "Don't look back - you can't change history or others' perception of history. Look forward."

III
Recommendations

In synthesizing the available literature, the results of the interviews, and the applicable observations of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges Presidents Academy members, there are several key recommendations that ensue from this study. These recommendations, listed below in a succinct manner, may be helpful to sitting presidents at community colleges and to those former presidents who are currently experiencing the adjustments addressed in this study:

As Vaughan (1986) points out, "one (can) readily conclude that today's community college presidency is indeed a high risk job" (p. 211). If sitting presidents emotionally and intellectually accept this reality prior to possible termination or forced retirement, this acceptance may help them in any possible future adjustment process. In other words, the full knowledge that the community college presidents position is vulnerable, stressful, and frequently brief in duration, will enable the president to make a more successful adjustment if he or she should later be terminated or forced into retirement.

Given the brief tenure of some community college presidents, it is always a good idea for a sitting president to remain receptive to other career opportunities, in education or in other fields.

It is important for presidents to maintain a realistic perspective of their professional life in relation to their other life interests. Community college presidents should not fuse their total identity with their professional positions.

Sitting presidents and those who have been terminated, should take the time to have and to maintain a healthy self-esteem. Whatever professional or personal injustices befall a president, they should be taken seriously, but

they should not be allowed to dominate that presidents' total life or communication with other individuals.

It is of prime importance to maintain a balanced life. This balanced life includes such areas as physical exercise, diet, leisure activities, and interaction with significant others. Keeping avocational interests that offer personal satisfaction active is very important (i.e. civic, church, fraternal interest).

As Hess (1986) pointed out, one of the major causes of executive dismissal is a breakdown in ethics or integrity. Carefully monitoring ethics and integrity while in office will enable a terminated or forced retired president to ensure that the subsequent adjustment does not include questions of a breach of ethics or integrity. As one terminated president stated: termination occurred to him, but he still could take satisfaction in passing the "mirror" test every morning.

The terminated or forced retired community college president needs to remember that life's passages include stages of adult development. While changes in job status may be devasting in the short term, such changes may lead to a more fulfilling and enriched life in the long term.

Make a realistic and specific financial plan while in office. Develop a financial scenario that would serve well if termination or forced retirement becomes a reality. Have your present contract include a one year grace period before termination.

Maintain your significant personal and professional friendships. These people can provide a strong support network for adjustment as well as for professional strategies.

As McGrath (1987) pointed out, advice from professional counselors can be of great value. Do not overlook the assistance that professionals can

offer. Work through problems with friends or professional help to develop a positive attitude towards change and new challenges.

Realize that feelings of rejection following termination are normal. Express those feelings but determine to work through them.

Keep a sense of humor. Be able to laugh at yourself.

These recommendations reflect the salient points of the interviews, the review of literature, and the applicable observation of members of the President's Academy of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

&title& &fname& &lname&
&school&
&address&
&city&, &state& &zip&

Dear &title& &lname&:

As you are aware from the July minutes and from our interim board meeting in Denver, Dr. Robert Parilla and I are beginning work on our proposal regarding forced retired presidents and presidents who have lost their positions.

In order for this study to have integrity, the primary method will be interviews. Therefore, I am requesting from you, as I did at the Presidents Academy Meeting, the names (including address, phone number and present position) of any president who, in your opinion, might be willing to be interviewed. The entire purpose of the study is positive in that the Presidents Academy intends to have recommendations emanating from the study that will help and assist all presidents in their current performance and in the event of professional separation from a presidential position. Once Dr. Parilla and I have a list of names, we will then be working with you and other trusted colleagues of these individuals so that if they are willing to be interviewed it will be as professional and as confidential as possible.

On a lighter note, Robert Parilla gets a gold star second to Dale Parnell's gold star for having returned to me the draft proposal with comments. Remember, Dr. Parilla and I said in Denver that we needed to have proposals back within two weeks so that we can proceed with Dr. James Wattenbarger and Dr. James Heck to refine the thrust of the study, methodology, and ultimate recommendations. Please attend to this matter with presidential expediency!! I will anticipate hearing from you by November 22, 1985, with your comments on the proposal and the names of those who would be willing to be interviewed. Note: keep in mind that you may suggest names of individuals who are again presidents of institutions who have gone through a previous tumultuous time as well as presidents who changed into other career fields.

For your convenience, I have enclosed a draft copy of the proposal so that you might comment upon it and return it to me. Please feel free to write handwritten comments upon the text. I have also enclosed a questionnaire soliciting the names of individuals who would be willing to be interviewed. Again, please return both of these documents by November 22, 1985.

Thank you very much for your cooperation, sense of humor and adventurous spirit.

With warmest regards,

Muriel Kay Heimer
President

RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR THE PRESIDENTS ACADEMY QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire relates to the research proposal focusing upon terminated and retired community college presidents. This proposal, tentatively entitled: Patterns of Adjustment: What Happens to Community College Presidents Following Termination or Retirement, was discussed at the Presidents Academy Board meeting in Denver. I am requesting from you the name, address, phone number, and present position of any presidents that might be willing to be interviewed for this project. Please complete this information below.

NAME OF FORMER PRESIDENT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

PRESENT POSITION: _____

NAME OF FORMER PRESIDENT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

PRESENT POSITION: _____

NAME OF FORMER PRESIDENT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

PRESENT POSITION: _____

Person completing this questionnaire: _____

Date: _____

Return to: Dr. Muriel Kay Heimer
Lake City Community College
Rt. 3 Box 7
Lake City, FL 32055

Person Interviewed _____
Title _____
Race _____ Sex _____
Location _____
Interviewer _____
Date _____
Other _____

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

(Suggested questions to be used throughout data collection).

Please note the following: If issues related to race or gender have an impact on any of your responses to the following questions, please provide the interviewer with appropriate details.

I. Financial Adjustments

a. What special financial problems do terminated or retired presidents encounter?

b. What are the most important financial planning steps a current president may take in order to be best prepared for the possibility of termination or forced retirement?

c. What were the most important forms of compensation enabling you to adjust to the loss of a presidential salary (i.e. savings, consulting fees, retirement pension, salary from new position)?

II. Career Adjustments

a. Did you consider a career change to a new profession? If so, what professions did you consider and why?

b. What are the most important steps in finding a new professional position following termination or retirement?

c. If you entered a new profession, what were the most important steps in that particular transition?

III. Leisure-time Adjustment

a. How did your termination or retirement affect your leisure-time activities?

b. Were you able to find positive outlets for your leisure-time activity following termination or retirement? What were the more important adjustments in this area?

c. Is there anything about the way that you organized your leisure-time activities following your termination or retirement that would change if you were given the opportunity to do so?

IV. Self-perception Adjustments

a. What advice would you give a recently terminated or retired president who was feeling a loss of self-worth?

b. How did your self-image change following termination or retirement?

c. Did your feelings of self-worth increase or decrease following termination or retirement? If they decreased, how did you adjust to meet this change?

V. Significant Relationship Adjustments

a. How did your relationships with friends from the workplace change once you were terminated or retired. How did you adjust to these changes?

b. What advice would you give a recently terminated or retiring president who was experiencing unusual difficulties with significant relationships?

c. Did your termination or retirement affect any significant personal relationship in your life? If so, how did you adjust to these changes?

VI. Recommendations

a. What are the most important recommendations that you could offer a recently terminated or retired president who is beginning the adjustment process to that career change?

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